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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 16, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1842 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: OIIP, KMDR
Captions: None
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: MEETING OF IRAQI LEADERS NEAR AL
NASSERIYA SYRIA'S NEXT
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01842

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: ECON POL AMB DCM
Laser1:
ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PAO:KVANDEVATE
DRAFTED: PAO:AALKHATIB
CLEARED: PAO:TPONCE

VZCZCADI518
OO RUEHC RUENAAA RUEKJCS RUEHZM RUEHLO RUEHFR
RHRMDAB RUCJACC RUCQSOC
DE RUEHAD #1842 1061042
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 161042Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9462
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0643
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0698
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUCJACC/USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL//PA//

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;
INR/NESA; INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: MEETING OF IRAQI LEADERS NEAR AL
NASSERIYA SYRIA'S NEXT

¶1. SUMMARY: THE MEETING OF IRAQI LEADERS NEAR AL NASSERIYA, IRAQI DEMONSTRATIONS IN BAGHDAD, MOSUL, AND AL NASSERIYA, AND U.S. WARNINGS TO SYRIA DOMINATED COVERAGE IN UAE MEDIA. SECRETARY POWELL'S FOREIGN PRESS CENTER REMARKS AND INTERNATIONAL

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CONDEMNATION OF THE LOOTING OF BAGHDAD'S MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES ALSO RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE. MEANWHILE, THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF ARAB COUNTRIES IN REBUILDING IRAQ WAS THE MAJOR THEME OF TODAY'S EDITORIALS. AN "AL ITTIHAD" EDITORIAL URGED ARABS TO RECOGNIZE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IRAQ. IN "AL KHALEEJ," COLUMNIST KAMEL ZUHAIR ASSERTED THAT SECRETARY RUMSFELD WAS THE ONLY PERSON TO DEFEND THE LOOTING IN IRAQ. END SUMMARY.

¶2. DUBAI-BASED BUSINESS-ORIENTED ARABIC DAILY "AL-BAYAN" CARRIED A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE THAT REPORTED DONALD RUMSFELD'S STATEMENTS COMPARING THE LOOTING OF BAGHDAD'S MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES TO LOOTING OCCASIONALLY OCCURRING AT OR AFTER SPORTING EVENTS.

¶3. COMMENTING ON U.S. WARNINGS TO SYRIA AND URGING AN ARAB ROLE IN CONFRONTING THESE THREATS, SHARJAH-BASED PAN-ARAB DAILY "AL-KHALEEJ" EDITORIALIZED 4/16:

"... THE EARTHQUAKE IN IRAQ CREATED AN UNBALANCED SITUATION, BUT THERE IS A CHANCE TO REUNITE ALL THAT HAVE BEEN SCATTERED, ALSO THERE ARE ABILITIES AND CAPABILITIES FROM WHICH THEY CAN BENEFIT. THE ARABS MUST REALIZE THAT SYRIA IS NOT THE ONLY TARGET, AND THAT PROTECTING IT IS PROTECTING WHAT REMAINS ON A LONG AMERICAN-ZIONIST LIST, REGARDLESS OF THE VIOLENT AND BRUTAL ATTACKS ... OTHERWISE, THE IMPRISONING OF ARABS THAT BEGAN IN PALESTINE AND CONTINUED TO IRAQ WILL NOT BE LIMITED TO ANY BORDERS."

¶4. DESCRIBING SECRETARY RUMSFELD AS "THE ENGINEER OF WAR," COLUMNIST KAMEL ZUHAIR WROTE IN "AL KHALEEJ" ON 4/16:

"... THE ONLY PERSON DEFENDING THE LOOTING AND STEALING IN IRAQ WAS THE ENGINEER OF WAR, RUMSFELD, WHO FOR THE FOURTH TIME GOT FED UP WITH THE MEDIA AND ITS TRANSMISSION OF NEWS AND PICTURES ... RUMSFELD STATED THAT IRAQ WILL MOVE FROM A POLICE STATE TO A LIBERATED COMMUNITY THAT EXPRESSES ITSELF THROUGH LOOTING AND STEALING. THE STRATEGIC THINKER RUMSFELD KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT WARS OF OCCUPATION AND NOTHING ABOUT WARS FOR LIBERATION ..."

¶5. URGING AN ARAB ROLE IN REBUILDING IRAQ, SEMI-OFFICIAL ABU DHABI-BASED ARABIC DAILY "AL-ITTIHAD" EDITORIALIZED 4/16:

"... IF ARAB COUNTRIES AND THEIR LEADES DON'T FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, TO WHICH THEY ARE OBLIGED BY BLOOD, RELIGION, LANGUAGE, AND HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS WITH THEIR BROTHERS (IN IRAQ), THEN THE REBUILDING OF IRAQ POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND SOCIALLY IS IN DANGER. THIS DANGER THREATENS NOT ONLY THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ BUT ALSO SYMBOLIZES A GREAT ADVERSARY TO ARAB POWER AND ARAB CAPABILITIES, AT A TIME WHEN ARABS ARE TRYING TO RISE IN THESE DARK MOMENTS FROM THEIR STUMBLINGS THAT THREATENS THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE."

¶6. IN A CLOSING STATEMENT, SALEM WROTE IN "AL-KHALEEJ" ON 4/16:

"BURNING THE 'DAR AL HEKMA' NATIONAL LIBRARY IN IRAQ, IN ADDITION TO LOOTING AND BURNING THE REST OF THE LIBRARIES IN MOSUL AND BASRA, IS NOT A RECKLESS ACTION AND SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF LOOTING DONE BY BURGLARS AND THIEVES. THESE FIRES WERE MEANT TO ERADICATE A CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE THAT GOES BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS ... IT IS A GREAT CRIME COMMITTED BY THE NEW OCCUPIER IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF MESOPOTAMIA AND GIVING BIRTH TO A NEW CULTURE FROM THE WOMB OF OCCUPATION. WHAT HAPPENED MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN THIS CONTEXT."

¶7. "AL KHALEEJ" CARRIED A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE UNDER THE HEADLINE "NEW AMERICAN CURRICULUM IN IRAQ ENDS PRIMACY OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE." DESPITE THE HEADLINE, THE ARTICLE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PRIMARY U.S. AIM IS TO SEPARATE POLITICS FROM EDUCATION AND "DE-BATHIFY" THE CURRENT SYSTEM. THE ARTICLE REPORTED THAT THE NEW U.S. SYSTEM WILL UTILIZE MULTIPLE LANGUAGES FOR INSTRUCTION AND WILL REFORM CURRENT TEACHING METHODS AND CURRICULA. THE ARTICLE ALLEGED THAT IRAQI STUDENTS WILL BE DEPRIVED FROM LEARNING THEIR LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL HISTORY.

